



**U.S. AIR FORCE**

# **Senior Executive Service HANDBOOK**



**September 2001**



*United States  
Department of the Air Force*

# **Senior Executive Service HANDBOOK**







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**U.S. AIR FORCE**



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## Introduction

This handbook is provided for Air Force executives as a guide to help answer questions. It is based upon guidance found in AFI 36-901 and Executive Resource Policy Letters on file in the Air Force Senior Leader Management Office (AFSLMO). It contains basic information and links to additional information.

Comments are welcome and can be sent to [sesmail@pentagon.af.mil](mailto:sesmail@pentagon.af.mil) or by fax to (703) 607-3621. If you need to contact AFSLMO staff, please call (703) 607-3600.

## Background

The Senior Executive Service (SES) was established by the Civil Service Reform Act (CSRA) of 1978 and became effective in July 1979. CSRA envisioned a senior executive corps whose members have solid executive skills, public service values, and a broad perspective of Government.

The SES covers managerial, supervisory, and policy positions above grade 15 that are not filled by Presidential appointment with Senate confirmation. The law excludes some agencies and agency components, such as independent Government corporations and intelligence agencies.

An executive may enter the SES as a career appointee, noncareer appointee, limited term appointee, or limited emergency appointee. Appointments to the career SES are based on merit principles and are subject to the approval of the Air Force Executive Resources Board (ERB) and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Status as a career appointee affords an SES member specific due process protections. Noncareer executives, on the other hand, serve at the discretion of the appointing authority.

Senior executives, like general officers, are found mainly in policy-making positions or in technical areas, such as acquisition, research and development, logistics, civil works, finance, information management, personnel, and so on.

Most SES members serve in the Secretariat, Headquarters Air Force Staff, and the Air Force Materiel Command. Many serve in a line command structure where executives above and below them frequently are general officers. Many senior executives are full deputies to commanding generals.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

***Office of Personnel Management (OPM):*** Develops SES policy, allocates SES positions to DoD, and approves the executive core qualifications (ECQs) of candidates selected for SES positions through its Qualifications Review Board (QRB) process.

***Department of Defense (DoD):*** Establishes policy and allocates positions to the Air Force.

***Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF):*** Retains full responsibility for management of the Air Force senior executive corps.

***Executive Resources Board (ERB):*** A board appointed by the Secretary of the Air Force to fulfill Title 5 requirements. The Air Force Senior Leader Management Office is the ERB Executive Secretary.

***Commanders of Major Commands (MAJCOMs), Joint Commands, Equivalent Secretariat and Air Staff Officials, and Supervisors:*** Manage the senior civilian resources assigned to their organizations.

***Air Force Senior Leader Management Office (AFSLMO):*** Provides support to the ERB in the administration of executive resources programs. The AFSLMO is the focal point for matters concerning civilian senior executives above General Schedule (GS) grade GS-15. It



is responsible for all controlled senior executive position allocations, assignments and other personnel actions, executive development, and special actions. The office implements force management policies and long-range plans and performs force analysis. It is responsible for GS-15 development courses and activities and serves as the Air Force focal point for implementation of the Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP).

***Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF):*** An operating personnel office. Servicing personnel office functions include advising management on how to establish new SES positions; providing classification advice; providing assistance to supervisors filling SES vacancies, including developing technical and desirable qualifications, developing rating and ranking plans and setting up panels, and developing interview questions; and serving as a point of contact for questions concerning other personnel matters, such as retirement, awards, and so on.

***Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC):*** An Air Force Field Operating Agency that provides civilian and military personnel operations and services.

## Structure of the SES

There are two types of SES positions: General and Career Reserved. A *General* position may be filled by a career, noncareer, or limited appointee. The same General position may be filled by a career appointee at one time and by a noncareer or limited appointee at another time. However, a *Career Reserved* position must always be filled by a career appointee.

***Criteria for Career Reserved Positions:*** A position is designated Career Reserved when a career employee must fill it to ensure the impartiality or the public's confidence in the impartiality, of the Government.

## **SES Appointments**

### ***Career***

Career appointments may be made to any SES position. Applicants are selected for career appointment through the Air Force SES merit staffing process. Before initial career appointment to the SES, the ERB chair approves the selection for the Air Force, and the OPM Qualifications Review Board (QRB) certifies the selected individual's executive qualifications.

### ***Noncareer***

The Secretary of Defense approves all noncareer appointees, subject to receipt of appropriate noncareer appointment authorizations from OPM and approval from the White House Office of Presidential Personnel for each appointment. There is no time limit on the appointment, but the individual serves at the pleasure of the appointing official. Competition is not required, nor is QRB certification. Appointments do not require merit staffing procedures, and appointees do not acquire SES career status. The appointing official determines that the individual meets qualification requirements. Appointments are terminated at the discretion of the Secretary of the Air Force or his/her designee after concurrence by the Secretary of Defense.

### ***Limited***

There are two types of time-limited SES appointments: limited term and limited emergency. Appointment may be made only to General positions. Appointments do not require merit staffing procedures, and appointees do not acquire SES career status. Appointments may be terminated at the discretion of the Secretary of the Air Force or his/her designee.



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### *Limited Term*

A limited term appointment is a nonrenewable appointment for up to 36 months to a position that must be abolished when the appointment expires.

### *Limited Emergency*

A limited emergency appointment is a nonrenewable appointment for up to 18 months to a position established to meet a bona fide, unanticipated, urgent need.

# **Managing Executive Resources**

## **Distinguishing Between SES and SL/ST Positions**

Positions that are classifiable above the GS-15 level but do not meet the SES functional criteria are placed in the Senior Level (SL) system or in the Scientific and Professional (ST) system, depending on the nature of the work.

### ***Senior Level Positions***

The Senior Level (SL) pay system was established under the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990 (FEPCA) to replace grades GS-16, 17, and 18 of the General Schedule, which were abolished. Positions in the SL system are classified above GS-15 but do not meet the executive criteria characteristic of the SES or involve the fundamental research and development responsibilities that are characteristic of the ST pay system. SL positions may be either competitive or excepted service.

### ***Scientific and Professional Positions***

Positions that are classified above the GS-15 level but do not meet the SES functional criteria are appropriately placed in the ST scientific and professional system if they involve performance of high-level research and development in the physical, biological, medical, or engineering sciences or a closely related field. All ST positions are in the competitive service.

## **Establishing SES Positions**

OPM authorizes allocations to DoD, which sub-allocates to the Air Force. These positions must meet both the SES functional criteria and grade level criteria prescribed in statute. An agency cannot fill a position in the SES without an authorized space allocation. The ERB approves all position requirements.



## Staffing

### Executive Core Qualifications

ECQs are the primary selection criteria for the SES. Although technical job-specific qualifications are important, the essence of the SES is the ability to lead. OPM has developed executive core qualifications (ECQs) that represent the critical skills that all executives need to succeed today and in the future. OPM guidance on ECQs is found at <http://www.opm.gov/ses/ecq.html>.

### Qualifications Review Boards

An independent QRB composed of executives outside the selecting agency must certify each new career member of the SES. This QRB is a critical, independent peer review of a candidate's executive qualifications to be a member of the SES and is the last step in the SES selection process. By focusing attention on executive qualifications, the QRB review helps to ensure that technical expertise does not outweigh leadership skill in the selection of new senior executives.

OPM prescribes the executive qualification criteria for career appointees. The criteria provide for consideration of demonstrated executive experience or successful participation in an OPM-approved candidate development program. The criteria also provide flexibility to allow appointment of those with special or unique qualities that indicate a likelihood of executive success.

### *QRB Membership*

OPM draws on SES members to participate on QRBs and to advise on QRB policy and procedures. Each board normally consists of three SES members, each from a different agency. A majority of board members must be SES career appointees. Air Force executives participate in this board process on a rotational basis.

## ***Certification***

After the CPF completes its merit staffing process, management selects a candidate and submits the choice to the ERB for approval. The ERB requests QRB certification of the selected individual's executive qualifications. OPM administers weekly QRBs. A QRB reviews each case and either approves or disapproves the candidate's executive qualifications. If approved, OPM notifies the Air Force to proceed with the appointment. Disapproval actions are usually due to the candidate not meeting the executive qualification requirements or not adequately addressing his/her qualifications in terms of the five ECQs. The case may be resubmitted for a second look. The entire QRB certification process is usually completed in less than 2 weeks.

## ***Suspension of QRB Certification for Specific Agencies***

When an agency head resigns or announces the intention to resign or if the President nominates a new agency head, OPM suspends QRB case processing for career SES appointments in that agency until a successor is appointed. OPM takes this action as a courtesy to the new agency head to afford him/her the greatest flexibility in making executive resource decisions. However, if an agency has a case that it considers urgent, the agency may ask OPM to forward it to a QRB for consideration. Factors include whether the new agency head would have personal interest in the selection, the organizational level of the position, the degree to which the candidate would be involved in policy matters, and how long it may be before the new agency head is appointed.

## ***SES Career Appointments***

### ***Merit Staffing Requirements***

The Secretary of the Air Force establishes the Executive Resources Board (ERB) to conduct the merit staffing process for career appointments. The ERB reviews the executive qualification requirements of each eligible candidate and makes recommendations to the appointing official concerning the candidates. The ERB established



case processing boards that meet monthly to review all pending cases and recruitment action to the ERB Chair:

- ❖ ***Vacancy Announcements:*** All agencies must announce SES vacancies that will be filled by initial career appointment to at least all Federal civil service employees. The U.S. Employment Service offices must also be notified. To meet these requirements, agencies list their vacancies in OPM's Government-wide automated SES vacancy announcement system (USAJOBS). Agencies and applicants can access the information through a variety of ways, including OPM's web site at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>.
- ❖ ***Rating and Ranking:*** All eligible candidates are rated and ranked by a panel of SES members and general officers on the basis of their knowledge, skills, abilities, and other job-related factors, as reflected in the position's qualifications standards. The record must be adequately documented to show the basis for qualifications, rating, and ranking determinations. The panel certifies the list of best-qualified candidates to the appointing official. The supervisory official may recommend a selection, but the ERB Chair, acting for the appointing official, makes the final determination. The appointment is not effective until a QRB certifies the candidate's executive qualifications.

## ***Appeals***

There is no right of appeal for a nonselected individual on actions taken by the ERB, the QRB, or the appointing official. Other avenues afforded by law or regulation (e.g., prohibited personnel practice allegation or discrimination complaint) may be pursued if appropriate.

## ***SES Probation***

An individual's initial career appointment becomes final only after the individual has successfully completed a 1-year probationary period. This period begins on the effective date of the appointment and ends 1 calendar year later.

## ***Recognition Upon Appointment to SES***

Commanders present to each new Air Force SES member a certificate of SES membership, an Air Force SES emblem (pin or lapel button), and an Air Force SES flag. The flag accompanies the SES member upon reassignment to another SES position in the Air Force. The flag remains the property of the Air Force unless awarded to the member upon departure. These items are available from AFSLMO.

## **SES Reassignments, Transfers, and Removals**

### ***Reassignments***

The ERB encourages functional and geographic mobility of SES members. The Air Force can reassign career SES employees to any SES position in the agency for which they are qualified:

- ❖ Non-geographic reassignments require a 15-day advance written notice, which the employee may waive.
- ❖ Geographic reassignments require consultation with the executive and a 60-day advance written notice. Air Force reassignments are viewed as career broadening experiences. In some cases, the Air Force offers incentives to move, such as relocation bonuses or an increase in the executive's pay level.

Failure to accept a directed reassignment subjects the individual to removal under adverse action procedures. If separation is for failure to accept directed reassignment to a different commuting area, the individual is entitled to discontinued service retirement (if eligible) or severance pay. Removal under these circumstances can be appealed to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

### ***Succession Planning***

To ensure optimal utilization of SES resources, the Air Force developed a succession planning process. A typical tour of duty is projected at 3–5 years, and positions are reviewed annually by senior management at a centralized reassignment board. An annual survey is sent to each executive to provide updated information about career



objectives, future assignment preferences, and estimated retirement date. This survey is used as part of a face-to-face discussion with the executive's supervisor prior to sending it to AFSLMO.

### ***Noncareer Reassignment Within an Agency***

After obtaining OPM approval, the Air Force may reassign a noncareer appointee to another General SES position for which he/she qualifies. No advance written notice to the appointee is required.

### ***Voluntary Reassignments***

AFSLMO sends out reassignment opportunity notices to all executives via e-mail. A full application is not required; however, the executive must provide a statement that addresses the mandatory technical qualifications of the position. Announcements are normally open for 2 weeks.

### ***Transfers***

A career appointee may be reassigned ("transferred") to another agency to an SES position for which he/she is qualified with the consent of the appointee and the gaining agency, except where there is a transfer of function between agencies.

### ***Transfer of Function***

A career SES employee is entitled to accompany his/her transferred function if the appointee would otherwise be removed from the SES. Failure to accompany a transferred function subjects the individual to removal under adverse action procedures. If separation is for failure to accept a transfer of function to a different commuting area, the individual is entitled to discontinued service retirement (if eligible) or severance pay. Removal under these circumstances can be appealed to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

### ***Noncareer Transfer to Another Agency***

A noncareer appointee can be transferred to a General SES position in another agency with OPM approval. The appointee must

meet the qualification requirements of the new position. If there is a transfer of function between agencies, noncareer appointees may be offered transfers at the discretion of the agency with OPM approval.

### ***Noncareer Removal***

Noncareer appointees can be removed at any time with a 1-day advance written notice that shows the effective date of the removal. The agency may include a statement of the reason for the action, but it is not required.

### ***Noncareer Suspension***

The law does not specify procedural requirements for suspending noncareer appointees for disciplinary reasons. Therefore, an agency may suspend noncareer appointees under whatever procedures it establishes:

- ❖ ***120-Day Moratorium:*** Removal or suspension of a noncareer appointee is not subject to the 120-day moratorium.
- ❖ ***Appeals:*** Removal or suspension of a noncareer appointee cannot be appealed to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

### ***SES Detail***

A detail is a management tool used to assist with short-term staffing needs allowing the temporary movement of an individual within, into, or out of the SES for a specified period, usually with the expectation that the employee will return to his/her regular position at the end of the detail. SES members can be detailed within the agency or to another agency. Details to certain non-Federal organizations under the Intergovernmental Personnel Act provisions, international organizations, and foreign governments are also permitted. Questions concerning such details may be directed to AFSLMO. Generally, details are in increments of up to 120 days. OPM approval is required for details of over 240 days when a non-SES employee is being detailed to an SES position that supervises other SES positions or if an SES employee is being detailed to a GS-15 or equivalent position. There is no requirement for advance notice to an executive of a detail.



## 120-Day Moratorium

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 provided for a “get acquainted period” during top management transitions. This is a time for new Presidential appointees and other noncareer appointees to get to know their senior career executives and their skills and expertise.

Agencies cannot take a variety of personnel actions until 120 calendar days after:

- ❖ The appointment of the agency head
- ❖ The appointment of the career appointee’s most immediate supervisor who is a noncareer appointee with the authority to make an initial appraisal of the career appointee’s performance. (For removal actions, the restriction pertains to immediate supervisors who are noncareer appointees and have the authority to remove the career appointee.)

The 120-day restriction affects involuntary reassignments, details, performance appraisals, removals for performance, removals for failure to be recertified, and removals during probation. However, appointees may voluntarily waive the moratorium on reassignments and removals.

## Precedence Priority (DV) Codes and Position Tiers

The gradeless nature of the SES requires a means by which to make position distinctions for protocol purposes. This is accomplished in the Air Force through distinguished visitor (DV) codes. The Executive Resources Board (ERB) assigns each SES position as code DV-4 (lieutenant general equivalent), DV-5 (major general equivalent), or DV-6 (brigadier general equivalent). Civilian positions above DV-4 are Executive Level positions, such as SECAF, Under Secretary, Assistant Secretaries, and General Counsel, and those Presidential appointments with Senate confirmation.

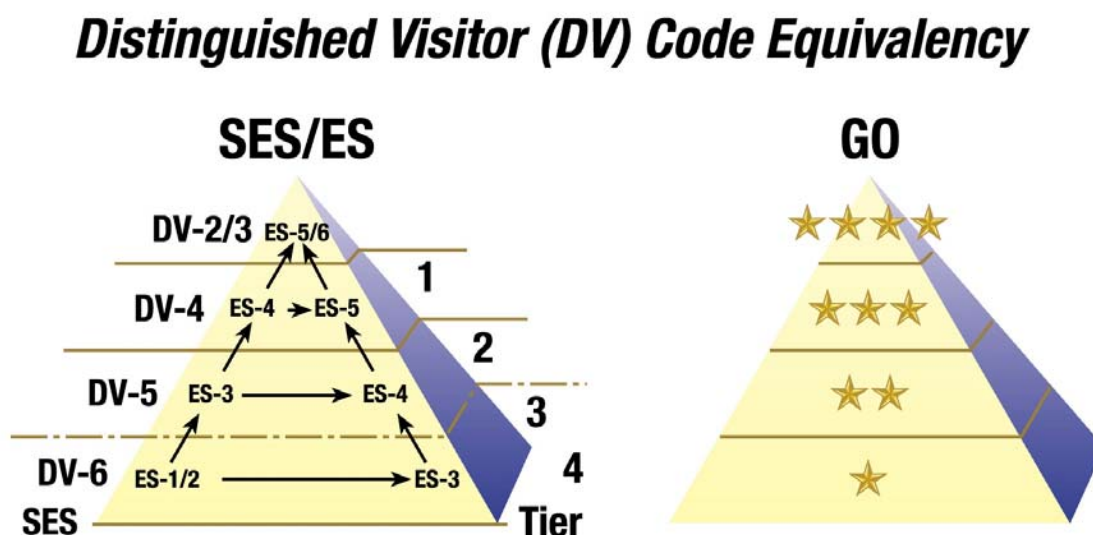
The DV code is based on the responsibility level of the position, is normally one or more levels lower than that of the supervisor, and may

be, but is not required to be, equal to the supervisor only if a full/only deputy to the supervisor.

An executive's DV code is the same as the position occupied, with these exceptions:

- ❖ The ERB generally assigns new appointees to the SES a DV code one level higher than that commensurate with their level of responsibility immediately prior to appointment to the SES. At management's option, after at least 1 year at the lower level, the DV code is increased in one-level increments to the level supported by the position. For example, if the position is a DV-5, the executive is hired as a DV-6 and remains as a DV-6 for at least 1 year.
- ❖ Executives retain their DV code when reassigned to a position with a lower DV code if the reassignment is for the good of the Air Force and the executive has held the higher DV code for at least 2 years.

For pay and assignment purposes, each SES position is placed in one of four tiers: Tier 1 (DV-4), Tier 2 (DV-5), Tier 3 (DV-6, normally filled through reassignment of a seasoned SES member), or Tier 4 (DV-6, normally filled by a new SES appointment). Tiers also affect the bonus amount that may be paid to an individual. The following figure shows the DV tiers and their corresponding general officer (GO) tiers.





DV code designations are approved by the ERB and are used to determine the order of precedence for official visits and activities, assignment of quarters, and travel status on Government aircraft and surface transportation. Protocol guidance from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) specifically defines DV-2, DV-3, and most DV-4 positions:

- ❖ DV codes are assigned to positions, not people.
- ❖ DV-2/3 is equivalent to four star. DV-2 is SECDEF; DV-3s are Under Secretary (US), Assistant Secretaries (AS, MR, FM, IE), and General Counsel (GC).
- ❖ DV-4 is equivalent to three star. Typical DV-4 is Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Administrative Assistant, Acting Deputy Chief of Staff, and AFMC Executive Director.
- ❖ DV-5 is equivalent to two star. Typical DV-5 is Deputy Assistant Secretary and Air Logistics Center Executive Directors.
- ❖ DV-6 is equivalent to one star.
- ❖ The minimum DV code for all senior executives is DV-6 (one star); most SES members are at this level.
- ❖ DV codes are used for protocol purposes such as *aircraft transportation, quarters, and seating arrangements at meetings*.
- ❖ Pay levels (i.e., ES-1 through ES-6) are personal to the person holding the position and do *not* determine the DV code level.

## **SES Pay**

Upon initial career appointment to the SES from the General Schedule or the private sector, pay is set at the lowest rate that achieves at least a 6-percent increase over the appointee's previous basic pay. This is normally the ES-1 level. Exceptions may be approved by the ERB when documentation clearly demonstrates superior qualifications, private sector earnings, or professional stature. However, pay upon initial SES career appointment may not exceed the ES-4 pay rate.

### **Adjusting Pay**

An agency can adjust the rate of basic pay once in any 12-month period. Setting pay upon initial appointment is considered an adjustment. Therefore, no further adjustments may occur for at least 1 year. Pay can be raised any number of rates (e.g., from ES-3 to ES-5), but it can be lowered only one rate at a time and only for performance or disciplinary reasons. The 12-month restriction applies even if the employee changes from one SES appointment (e.g., limited term) to another SES appointment (e.g., noncareer) in the same agency. If an individual transfers to an SES position in another agency, the pay level is negotiable. It may be set at any rate, and the transfer begins a new 12-month waiting period if the rate is changed.

### **Locality Pay**

The President has the option of extending locality pay to non-General Schedule positions, including the SES (but not the Executive Level). Locality pay entitlement is based on the official duty station. Basic pay plus locality pay for SES members may not exceed Executive Level III. Locality pay is included in calculations for retirement, life insurance, thrift savings, severance pay, advances in pay upon appointment, and lump-sum annual leave payment upon separation. However, it is not included in calculations for performance awards.



## Aggregate Limit on Pay

SES members are subject to the legal limit on aggregate compensation. Basic pay and other compensation paid during a calendar year cannot exceed the pay rate for Executive Level I of the Executive Schedule. The aggregate limit applies to basic pay, locality pay, awards (rank, performance, incentive), physicians' comparability allowances, special pay adjustments for law enforcement officers, recruitment and relocation bonuses, retention allowances, and other similar payments.

Except for retention allowances, any excess amount is carried over and paid as a lump sum at the beginning of the next calendar year. That payment must be taken into account when applying the Level I ceiling for the new calendar year. If either a performance award or rank award would cause an executive's aggregate compensation to exceed the Level I ceiling by the end of the calendar year, the excess amount is withheld from the award rather than from the individual's basic pay. The withheld excess will be paid at the beginning of the following calendar year.

## Pay Flexibility

Agencies have discretionary authority to provide additional compensation to meet recruitment, relocation, and retention needs:

- ❖ ***Recruitment and Relocation Bonuses:*** Agencies may pay as a lump sum, recruitment bonuses for new appointees and relocation bonuses for current employees who are moving to a different commuting area of up to 25 percent of basic pay when they would encounter difficulty in filling the position in the absence of a bonus. The Air Force has two levels of recruitment/relocation bonuses. Basic bonuses are paid at \$5,000–\$10,000 for areas with a basic allowance for housing (BAH) less than Washington, DC, and enhanced bonuses are paid at \$15,000–\$20,000 for areas with a BAH equal to or greater than Washington, DC. To receive these bonuses, an employee must sign an agreement to complete a period of

service with the agency. The service agreement is 12 months for the basic and 24 months for the enhanced. Failure to complete the service agreement requires repayment on a pro rata basis. These payments are not considered a part of basic pay.

- ❖ ***Retention Payments:*** Agencies may pay a retention allowance (paid bi-weekly) of up to 25 percent of basic pay to an employee if the unusually high or unique qualifications of the employee or a special need of the agency for the employee's services makes it essential to retain the employee and if the agency determines that, without the allowance, the employee would be likely to leave the Federal Government whether or not other employment is planned. DV-4/5 are paid 20 percent of their basic pay, and a DV-6 is paid 15 percent. These payments are not considered a part of basic pay.

## **Other Flexibility**

Agencies may also pay pre-employment interview expenses and travel and moving costs for new appointees. Agencies may advance pay for new appointees up to two pay periods (unless the appointee is the agency head). The special pay provisions for law enforcement officers and physician comparability allowances also cover SES members who hold those types of positions.



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## **Performance and Accountability**

### **Performance Management**

The performance management process integrates performance, pay, and awards systems to improve employee and organizational effectiveness.

Public law requires Performance Review Boards (PRBs). Air Force PRBs review senior rater recommendations for all SES/SIES members concerning performance ratings and make recommendations to the PRB appointing authority (SAF/OS for the Secretariat PRB, AFMC/CC for the AFMC PRB, and AF/CV for the Air Staff and Others PRB and the Intelligence PRB). For career appointees, PRBs recommend performance bonuses. They ensure reasonable consistency, objectivity, and equity in the appraisal and performance award process.

One of the goals of the SES is to hold senior executives accountable for their individual and organizational performance. Using a performance management program that is results-driven and linked with the agency's strategic planning initiatives is an effective means of achieving this goal.

### **Performance Management Systems**

Agencies establish SES performance management systems that provide for planning and communicating performance expectations, identifying performance elements and the requirements against which performance will be assessed, monitoring performance, appraising and rating performance, and using performance results as a basis for pay, awards, and other personnel decisions. The law requires that systems have at least three summary rating levels: unsatisfactory, minimally satisfactory, and fully successful.

## ***ERB Policy on SES Pay Level Adjustments***

At its 3 May 2000 meeting, the ERB approved changes to policy concerning SES pay level adjustments, which may be found at <http://www.dp.hq.af.mil/dps/erbpolcy.htm>.

## ***Senior Executive Performance Plans***

### ***Performance Appraisal***

An annual performance appraisal is required for each SES member. The performance appraisal is the key factor in determining retention in the SES and in selection for pay level adjustments and performance awards. The normal SES performance appraisal period is 1 July through 30 June. However, supervisors complete an appraisal for a shorter period, as follows:

- ❖ If the SES member has been in a position for at least 120 calendar days, the supervisor completes an interim appraisal if either the member or supervisor is changing positions.
- ❖ When an SES member is detailed or reassigned within the Air Force for 120 days or longer, the SES member's supervisor during that period prepares an interim appraisal. When an SES member is detailed outside of the Air Force, the supervisor obtains appraisal information from the borrowing organization for consideration in the member's next rating of record.
- ❖ The SES member's supervisor considers interim appraisals in assigning a final rating.
- ❖ Assistance in preparing performance appraisals can be found at <http://www.dp.hq.af.mil/dps/01apngl.htm>

## ***Recertification for Retention in the SES***

Every third year, after the end of the performance appraisal period on 30 June, Performance Review Boards (PRBs) recertify for retention in the SES, conditionally recertify, or do not recertify all career SES members who were in the SES for the full 3 years ending that 30 June. Recertification is an extension of the original QRB certification through



which most members entered the SES. Recertification is required every 3 years thereafter. If not recertified, the member is separated from the SES. If conditionally recertified, supervisors establish a performance improvement plan, closely monitor the member's performance, and at the end of 1 year recertify or do not recertify for retention in the SES. AFSLMO issues specific instructions before each recertification process.

## Awards and Other Recognition

The law authorizes agencies to grant special recognition, awards, and incentive payments to SES members to help attract, retain, recognize, reward, and motivate highly competent executives. These payments and forms of recognition include performance awards (bonuses), Presidential Rank Awards, and other forms of recognition. By law, only *career* appointees are eligible for rank and performance awards.

Presidential Rank Awards and performance awards (bonuses) recognize overall high-level performance by SES career appointees. Rank awards are based upon service over an extended period of time, and bonuses reflect performance over a single appraisal period. A single outstanding performance rating does not justify a rank nomination, but it may justify a bonus. Conversely, a record of outstanding ratings over a period of years suggests that an individual may be a candidate for a rank award whether or not the individual has received a bonus each year.

Other forms of recognition are available to recognize a single, significant act or service that may have occurred in a day, a month, or any other specified time frame and is not tied to overall performance.

### Performance Awards

#### *Individual Award Amounts*

The Air Force has standard amounts that can be paid based on an individual's tier level.

Air Force performance award amounts are within the legal requirement of at least 5 percent but no more than 20 percent of basic

pay as of the end of the performance appraisal period. An individual may not voluntarily agree to accept a bonus of less than 5 percent.

### *Award Determinations*

The approving authority determines who receives a performance bonus and the amount of the award after considering recommendations from the PRB. When making bonus recommendations, the PRB must be composed of a majority of career SES members.

### *Bonus Payment Procedures*

Bonuses are paid in a lump sum. Payments are not subject to retirement, health benefits, or life insurance deductions, and they are not included in the “high-three” average pay computation for retirement benefits or in basic pay for thrift savings plan computations. Payments are subject to income tax withholding; they are subject to FICA tax withholding if the individual is in FERS or CSRS Offset. Bonuses are subject to the Executive Level I ceiling on total compensation for a calendar year.

### *Presidential Rank Awards*

The most prestigious recognition afforded a career member of the SES is Presidential Rank. Executives whose performance is exceptional for at least 3 years may be nominated for one of two Presidential rank levels: Distinguished or Meritorious Executive. An SES employee may not receive the same award more than once in a 5-year period. There is no restriction on receiving a Meritorious award before receiving a Distinguished award. Performance Review Panels (PRPs) consider nominations annually. There are three initial PRPs: Secretariat, AFMC, and Air Staff and Others. The top nominees are sent to a central PRP where the Air Force nominees are selected. These names are forwarded through DoD to OPM.

The Director of OPM, with assistance from panels composed of leaders from Government and the private sector, recommends awardees to the President, who then makes the final selections. Payments of 35 percent of base pay (Distinguished Executive) and 20 percent of base



pay (Meritorious Executive) accompany these awards. The Secretary, along with the Chief of Staff, traditionally hosts a ceremony and reception honoring the Air Force's Presidential Rank recipients.

Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (DISES) award packets are submitted separately to an Air Force central board composed of members of the intelligence community. Air Force nominee(s) are forwarded to OSD for consideration and final selection. Award payments are the same percentages as shown above. There is a separate budget pool for these awards.

### ***SES Honorary Awards***

Non-Government organizations present non-monetary awards to recognize outstanding executive achievements. AFSLMO annually requests nominations for these awards:

- ❖ Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership, given by American University
- ❖ Federal Executive Institute Alumni Association Executive-of-the-Year Award.

## **Executive Enhancement**

Each year, a number of enhancement opportunities are offered to Air Force senior executives.

### **Mandatory New Member Enhancement**

During their first year following appointment, career SES/SIES must attend:

- ❖ USAF Senior Leader Orientation Course (SLOC) (GO and SES program) (POC: AFSLMO/DPO).
- ❖ Either of the following: The Federal Executive Institute's Leadership for a Democratic Society Course (FEI-LDS) or Harvard University's Senior Managers in Government. If the executive has attended either FEI-LDS or Harvard's Senior Executive Fellows as a GS-15, then the requirement is waived. Web sites: FEI: <http://www.leadership.opm.gov/lds/index.html>  
Harvard: <http://www.execprog.org/programs/smg/smg.htm>  
(POC: AFSLMO/DPD)

### **Optional Enhancement**

Career SES/SIES during the second or third year following appointment may attend:

- ❖ Office of the Secretary of Defense APEX orientation course, web site: <http://persec.whs.mil/apex/index.html>
- ❖ Office of Personnel Management: SES Orientation Course, web site: <http://www.opm.gov/ses/orientation.html>

### **Continuing Enhancement**

Several courses are centrally funded by AFSLMO and are offered through a competitive selection process. AFSLMO/DPD announces the courses to the executive corps by e-mail. Topics cover national security, leadership, and functional issues, such as acquisition or information management, and are offered by various universities and institutions.



## Ethics

On 3 February 1993, the U.S. Office of Government Ethics (OGE) published “Standards of Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch” (5 CFR 2635). It is the primary source of guidance for ethics and standards of conduct. Subsequently (30 August 1993), DoD issued supplemental guidance in the form of DoD Directive 5500.7R, “Joint Ethics Regulation.” This publication is applicable to all members of DoD. A summary of its provisions follows.

### General

- Use Government resources only for Government purposes.
- Do not use public office for private gain.
- Do not give preferential treatment to any private entity.

### Gifts from Outside Sources

- Do not solicit or accept gifts from a “prohibited source” or gifts given in recognition of one’s official position.
- A “prohibited source” is any non-Federal entity that (1) seeks official action or does business with the Air Force or (2) has interests that may be substantially affected by one’s official duties.

### Exceptions to Gifts from Outside Sources

- A gift of \$20 or less, with a limit of \$50 per year per source.
- Gifts based on a personal relationship.
- Discounts or promotions available to large segments of the public.
- Awards and prizes given as part of a regularly established program of recognition.
- Free attendance at a widely held conference, when attendance would further Government interests.

### Gifts Between Employees

- Generally, do not give a gift to, or solicit a gift for, an official superior.

### Exceptions to Gifts Between Employees

- Food and refreshments shared within the office.
- Personal hospitality gifts on social occasions.
- Gifts on special, infrequent occasions, such as retirement, that do not exceed \$300 per gift or \$10 per donating individual.

## **Conflicting Financial Interests**

An SES member may not take action on, or provide input to, matters that will have a direct and predictable effect on one's outside financial interests or the interests of one's spouse or children.

## **Impartiality**

An SES member must perform official duties fairly and impartially and may not give special treatment to anyone affected by the performance of duties.

## **Misuse of Position**

An SES member may not use his/her official position to (1) coerce benefits from a private party or (2) imply that the Government endorses or sanctions a product, service, enterprise, or private organization.

## **Financial Interest Disclosure**

Executives must annually file an Executive Branch Public Financial Disclosure Report (SF 278), through their ethics counselor with their supervisor on or before 15 May. Executives must also file SF 278 within 30 days of appointment to the SES and no later than the 30th day after leaving the SES. A late filing fee of \$200 may be levied if the report is not filed on time.

The financial interest report provides a mechanism for determining actual or potential conflicts between an executive's public responsibilities and private interests.

Questions concerning statutory or regulatory provisions regarding conflicts of interest or prohibited activities should be brought to the attention of the ethics counselor in the servicing legal office.

The SF 278 may be obtained from the following web site:  
<http://www.dior.whs.mil/ICDHOME/SFEFORMS.HTM>



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## Benefits and Exceptions

In general, senior executives are subject to the normal provisions of law that govern other Government employees. However, there are exceptions because the SES was designed as a separate Federal personnel system.

### Annual/Sick Leave

SES members are subject to the same annual and sick leave systems as other employees, with the following exceptions:

- ❖ Executives have a 720-hour (90-day) limit on the amount of annual leave that may be carried over from one year to the next. Leave earned in excess of this ceiling will be forfeited if not used by the end of a leave year.
- ❖ When a current Federal employee receives an appointment to the SES, annual leave accumulated at that time in excess of 240 hours must be used by the end of the calendar leave year or it will be forfeited. Annual leave not in excess of the 240-hour limit (and any leave then accrued while serving in the SES) is carried forward and is subject to the 720-hour annual leave limitation.
- ❖ A retiring executive who has accumulated leave above the 720-hour ceiling will receive payment for the entire amount in the leave account provided he/she retires before the end of a leave year.
- ❖ Credit hours are prohibited. Credit hours are any hours, within an approved flexible work schedule, that are in excess of an employee's basic work requirement and that the employee elects to work to vary the length of a future workweek or workday.

Senior executives are excluded from both premium pay (for overtime and Sunday or holiday work) and compensatory time.

## **Last Move Home**

Retiring career SES members are entitled to payment of moving expenses if they had moved geographically as a career SES appointee during or after the 5 years preceding eligibility for optional retirement. Travel is authorized for family, but per diem and movement of household goods are for the member only.

## **Sabbaticals**

The ERB may approve a sabbatical for up to 11 months (but not less than 3 months) for full-time study, uncompensated work experience, or research by a career SES member. A member may have only one sabbatical in any 10-year period. Sabbatical eligibility includes the following:

- ❖ The member must have had 7 years of Federal civilian service at the SES or equivalent level, with at least 2 of the 7 years in the SES.
- ❖ The member must not be eligible for optional retirement.
- ❖ The member must have a current outstanding performance appraisal.
- ❖ The member must agree to remain in Federal civilian service for 2 consecutive years after completion of the sabbatical.



## **Retirement Systems**

### **CSRS and FERS**

Senior executives are subject to one of two retirement systems: the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) or the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS).

Career SES members appointed after 31 December 1986 who have no prior creditable civilian Government service are covered by the FERS. Newly appointed SES members with career status and appointed after this date should consult their servicing personnel office to review the "CSRS and FERS Handbook for Personnel and Payroll Offices," FPM Supplement 830-1, to determine coverage and entitlements.

### **Discontinued Service Retirement**

To qualify for discontinued service retirement (DSR), an eligible SES member must be separated against his/her will. DSR cannot be requested because it is an involuntary separation. To be eligible for DSR, an executive must meet the following criteria:

- ❖ Separated from a position subject to CSRS or FERS coverage
- ❖ If covered by CSRS, contributed to the CSRS retirement fund for 1 of the past 2 years of service
- ❖ Be either 50 years of age with 20 years of service or any age with 25 years of service.

More information can be obtained from the servicing Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF) or from AFSLMO at (703) 607-3610 or DSN 327-3610.

## **Entitlements**

### **Senior Executive Entitlements for SES/SIES**

#### ***SES Air Force Lapel Pin***

The silver colored SES Air Force lapel pin is a three-dimensional rendering of the SES keystone logo. The keystone has been a symbol of the SES since its inception in 1979. The Air Force SES Office distributes the pin to newly appointed SES and SIES members. Executives are encouraged to wear the pin as an indication of their position and rank. Extra pins may be purchased for \$5 each from AFSLMO by calling (703) 607-3610.

#### ***Identification Card/Access to Pentagon***

SES members are issued Air Force civilian identification (ID) cards over stamped with the letters “SES.” For those from outside the DC area planning to attend a meeting in the Pentagon, the sponsoring office is responsible for contacting Defense Protective Service to place the member’s name on the access roster to be issued an unescorted visitor pass. Those who frequently visit the Pentagon and would like a building pass should contact AFSLMO at [sesmail@pentagon.af.mil](mailto:sesmail@pentagon.af.mil). If the SES member works in the Pentagon, his/her organization will assist in obtaining a building pass.

#### ***Motor Vehicle Insignia***

Each senior executive is authorized a maximum of two motor vehicle insignias, either vehicle stickers or dashboard cards. Display of the SES vehicle insignia affords executives the same parking privileges as general officers. To obtain insignias, call AFSLMO at (703) 607-3600 or DSN 327-3600.

#### ***Certificate of Appointment***

To commemorate selection to the SES, each executive is presented with a Certificate of Appointment. This certificate incorporates the Government seal, the Air Force SES logo, and the SES member’s name.



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## ***Official Color Portrait***

Color portrait photography is available to SES members through local visual information services. Portrait requests normally are limited to 25 8" x 10" photographs; additional 5" x 7" copies may be requested. It is recommended that each SES member arrange to have an official color photograph taken. Male executives must be in business suits (coat and tie), and women executives must be in business attire. Flags in the background are optional. Only the official photograph is digitized and put on the web site along with the executive's biographical sketch, which is prepared by the executive upon entry into the SES. If sending a hard (printed) copy of a digital image via surface mail, the photograph must be printed on paper designed for printing photographs (which is coated, heavier stock). Digital prints on anything other than photographic quality stock will not be accepted. Photographs need to be sent to the Air Force News Agency/NSPP, 203 Norton Street, San Antonio, TX 78226-1848, (210) 925-1362 or DSN 845-1362. Note: When the senior executive moves from the Air Force or retires, the biography is removed from the Air Force web site link.

## ***Travel Orders***

The SES member's DV code should be included in Block 3 of DD Form 1610, Request and Authorization for TDY Travel of DoD Personnel. The DV code designation helps eliminate confusion arising over billeting or transportation arrangements. The code may be found in the SES position description, Optional Form 8, Block 24.

## ***United States Flag***

SES members are authorized United States (U.S.) flags for their offices. One flag, staff, and stand are issued to the member by the organization and do not transfer with the member. These items are ordered from the organization's supply custodian. The approved flag is 4'5" x 5'6" rayon with gold fringe.

## ***SES Flag***

Each senior executive is issued one flag by the SES office. The SES flag is mailed to the SES member. Members take this flag with them when they change assignments within the Air Force. Upon separation from the Air Force, the member may be awarded the flag.

## ***Social Protocol Stationery***

SES stationery is available for members of the SES/SIES to use for official social functions. It may not be used for any personal purpose. Stationery includes SES notepaper with envelopes and SES invitations (blank format) with envelopes. Ordering information can be found at <http://www.dp.hq.af.mil/dps/statordr.htm>.

## ***The SES Store***

The Senior Executive Association (SEA) Professional Development League offers SEA flags (desktop and standard 3" x 4") and ties featuring the official SES logo. Executives interested in purchasing any of these items may visit the SES Store at <http://seniorexecs.com/>. Discounts on flags and ties are offered to SEA members.

## ***Obtaining an SES (DoD Civilian) ID Card***

The Washington Headquarters Office is responsible for issuing DoD civilian ID cards, AF Form 2750, and is located in Room 4C881 in the Pentagon.

All senior executives in the National Capital Region (Washington, DC, and metropolitan area) should call (703) 693-8373 to set up an appointment. Executives who will be in the area on temporary duty (TDY) can call DSN 223-8373 to make an appointment.

Cards are issued Tuesday through Thursday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The latest SF-50, Notice of Personnel Action, along with a picture ID must be presented at the appointment.



Senior executives surrender this ID card upon retirement, separation, or transfer to another agency outside DoD.

## **SL/ST/SIP Entitlements**

SL/ST/SIP employees have the above entitlements of ID card, U.S. flag, official photograph, biography, and travel orders with a DV-6 code.

# SES/SIES & SL/ST/SIP Benefits Comparison

Benefit	SES/SIES	SL/ST/SIP
Pay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Six discrete pay levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government-wide</li> <li>May be adjusted by Executive Order</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Six pay ranges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AF-determined</li> <li>Adjusted annually with cost of living adjustment</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay ceiling is Executive Level III</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay ceiling is the same for SES</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay adjustments are considered annually in accordance with the AF Pay Policy, SES Progression Model, and must be based on the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjustments may not occur more than once in any 12-month period</li> <li>PRB Chair may approve ES-2 through ES-4 increases. ES-5/6 and policy exceptions require ERB approval.</li> <li>Adjustments are based on performance and position held.</li> <li>Pay may be lowered for cause only one level at a time.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay adjustments are considered during the annual performance review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjustments are based on criteria as outlined in the Air Force SL Pay Setting Matrix (August 2000) or Air Force ST Pay Setting Matrix (March 1997).</li> <li>Approval levels are the same as SES.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay is <i>not</i> authorized for overtime; Sunday, holiday, night, standby, irregular, or hazardous duty; compensatory time authorized is <i>not</i> authorized.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay is authorized for overtime, Sunday, holiday, night, standby, irregular, or hazardous duty; compensatory time is authorized.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severance pay entitlements are the same for SES, SL, and ST.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severance pay entitlements are the same as SES.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members may be eligible for pay retention if changed to a lower grade.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members may be entitled to grade retention or pay retention if changed to a lower grade.</li> </ul>
Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated DV-6 or higher.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated DV-6 (0-7 equivalent).</li> </ul>
Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have maximum accumulation of annual leave of 720 hours.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have maximum accumulation of annual leave of 240 hours.</li> </ul>
Executive/ Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have statutory mandate for continuing development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have opportunities for professional/technical development.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have opportunities for executive level development, including sabbaticals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May have opportunities for executive level development.</li> </ul>
Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are subject to directed geographic relocation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add breadth and depth of experience</li> <li>Serve AF mission.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are subject to mobility but not normally relocated because SL/ST positions require very specialized experience.</li> </ul>
Appraisal System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive annual performance ratings subject to approval.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive annual performance ratings subject to approval.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serves as basis for performance awards (bonuses) and other monetary awards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serves as basis for performance awards and other honorary and monetary awards.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serves as basis for reassignment, removal from the SES or reduction in pay level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serves as basis for demotion or removal from Federal service.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cannot be appealed or aggrieved but may be challenged through the SES appraisal review process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be aggrieved in accordance with AF grievance procedures.</li> </ul>
Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance Awards (bonuses): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are based on performance rating</li> <li>Are approved in preset bonus amounts based on Tier of SES position</li> <li>Are paid in lump sum.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance Awards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are based on performance rating</li> <li>Are approved in preset bonus amounts</li> <li>Are paid in lump sum.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Benefit	SES/SIES	SL/ST/SIP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rank Awards:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reward exceptional performance over an extended period</li> <li>Must meet eligibility requirements</li> <li>Distinguished Executive Award amount is 35% of basic pay</li> <li>Meritorious Executive Award amount is 20% of basic pay</li> </ul> </li> <li>Other Awards:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May receive honorary recognition or other cash awards, such as suggestion</li> <li>Paid in lump sum.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rank Awards:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are not applicable to SL/ST</li> <li>Honorary Award combined with special act and cash award.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Other Awards:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May receive honorary recognition or other cash awards, such as special act</li> <li>May receive time-off awards.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Retirement	Retirement eligibility for optional and discontinued service retirement is the same for SES, SL, and ST.	
Last Move Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are entitled to payment of moving expenses upon retirement if, as an SES, geographically moved within 5 years preceding eligibility for optional retirement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are not eligible.</li> </ul>
Reinstatement in the SES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A former SES member may be reinstated in the SES if separated for reasons other than performance or disciplinary or instead of removal for these reasons.</li> </ul>	
Removal and Suspension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be removed for performance reasons:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be removed from the SES for one unsatisfactory rating</li> <li>Must be removed from SES for two less than fully successful ratings</li> <li>No grievance or appeals to MSPB</li> <li>May have informal hearing before MSPB</li> <li>Are entitled to placement no lower than GS-15.</li> </ul> </li> <li>May be removed or suspended for misconduct, neglect of duty, or malfeasance:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are not entitled to placement outside SES</li> <li>May appeal to MSPB.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be removed, demoted, or reassigned for performance reasons:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be removed, demoted, or reassigned as a result of a unsatisfactory performance rating</li> <li>May appeal to MSPB.</li> </ul> </li> <li>May be removed or suspended for misconduct:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could result in oral admonishment, reprimand, suspension, or removal</li> <li>Entitled to grievance or appeal, as appropriate.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Reduction in Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would have separate RIF procedures as determined by AF ERB.</li> <li>Have placement rights to any vacant SES position in DoD for which qualified.</li> <li>Are entitled to placement outside the SES to a position no lower than GS-15.</li> <li>Are entitled to placement assistance by OPM.</li> <li>Are eligible for discontinued service retirement if age and service requirements are met.</li> <li>Can appeal RIF action to the MSPB.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are covered by the Federal competitive service RIF procedures, such as those used for GS employees.</li> <li>Are entitled to placement at same or lower grade based on retention standing (tenure, veteran preference, length of service, and credit for performance).</li> <li>Are entitled to grade retention/pay retention.</li> <li>May be eligible for discontinued service retirement.</li> <li>Can appeal RIF action to the MSPB.</li> </ul>
Other		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conversion from SES to SL or ST does not require a new probationary period.</li> <li>SLs and STs are not subject to SES recertification every 3 years.</li> </ul>

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q.** How can I obtain an AF Civilian ID Card for my family and myself?

**A.** Authorization to obtain an AF Form 354, AF Civilian ID Card, will be issued by the Servicing Personnel Flight (SPF). The SES member's card should list the DV code, not the pay level. The Spouse ID Card should state "SES civilian dependent." Civilian spouses and dependents are also authorized Civilian ID Cards. The servicing Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF) verifies eligibility for all civilian employees and dependents, including retired employees and their dependents.

**Q.** How can I obtain an AF SES lapel pin?

**A.** An AF SES silver lapel pin is unique to the AF and is issued at the time of appointment. All SES and SIES members may purchase extra AF SES pins. The SES pins are available at the Pentagon, USAF Services, Room 5E917, (703) 697-0427 or DSN 227-0427, for National Capital Region SES/SIES members only (Washington, DC, metropolitan area).

All others may purchase the SES pins by sending a request to AFSLMO with a money order or personal check made payable to "Pentagon USAF Services." The pins are \$5 each, and there is no limit to the number of pins an SES/SIES member may purchase. The request to AFSLMO may be mailed to AFSLMO/DPO, 1111 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 512, Arlington, VA 22202. AFSLMO will mail the pins to the requesting member.

OPM includes one standard SES bronze pin in its welcome package for new SES members.



**Q.** How do I requisition SES stationery?

**A.** SES stationery is available for members of the SES/SIES to use for official social functions. It may not be used for any personal purpose. Stationery includes SES note paper, SES invitations (blank format), envelopes for invitations, and envelopes for note paper. More information can be found at <http://www.dp.hq.af.mil/dps/statordr.htm>.

**Q.** Am I eligible for a Last Move Home at Government expense?

**A.** Career SES members are eligible if a PCS move was made within 5 years of retirement eligibility as an SES member. Travel is authorized for family, but per diem and movement of household goods is for the member only.

**Q.** How do I obtain a parking decal?

**A.** Parking decals are available only for AF SES/SIES. With a decal, the member is eligible to park in General Officer spaces. One decal is included with the welcome package. Additional decals are available by calling AFSLMO, (703) 607-3610 or DSN 327-3610. Retirees are not eligible for parking decals.

**Q.** What publications does an executive receive?

**A.** Executives receive:

- Executive Resource Board (ERB) Policy Memoranda: Periodic notes on significant events.
- OPM Newsletter: <http://www.opm.gov/ses/index.htm>.
- OPM Manager's Guide to the Senior Executive Service: <http://www.opm.gov/ses/refroom.html>.
- AF News Notes: <http://www.dp.hq.af.mil/dps/nlindex.htm>.
- AFSLMO Home Page: <http://www.dp.hq.af.mil/dps/>.

**Q.** Where can I dine in the Pentagon?

**A.** The Secretary's Dining Room, 4D859, is only available to senior executives and General Officers. Each AF SES and GO is automatically a member.

**Q.** What DV codes do AF executives hold?

**A.** SES/SIES are generally DV-4, DV-5, or DV-6. ST/SIP/SL are DV-6.

**Q.** Where can I find the ERB policy on SES/SIES pay level adjustments?

**A.** It is found on the web at <http://www.dp.hq.af.mil/dps>.

**Q.** Who can use the Visiting General's Room?

**A.** AF SES members from outside the Washington, DC, area visiting the Pentagon may use the Visiting General's Office, Room 4E939, if the room is available. Availability is determined by calling (703) 697-8341 after arriving at the Pentagon. Priority is given to General Officers.

**Q.** What is the SES Notebook (Laptop) Policy?

**A.** Computer requirements, including laptops, are handled by the local Air Force communications unit or, for Air Force SES assigned to joint organizations, the respective local office responsible for satisfying the computer requirements for that organization. The talking paper on this subject is available at <http://www.dp.hq.af.mil/dps/>.

**Q.** Do executives need an official biography and photograph?

**A.** All senior executives should have an official biography and official photograph prepared and placed on the AF web page. SES members can contact the local AF public affairs office for assistance or can schedule a photograph appointment with a local photographer.



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members can contact the local AF public affairs office for assistance or can schedule a photograph appointment with a local photographer.

**Q.** What kind of a photograph is required to accompany the biography?

**A.** An official Air Force color photograph of the SES member in business attire is required with each biography submitted to Air Force News Service. Each photograph must be sent as a separate JPEG file. Flags may be included in the photograph. The name and SSAN of the executive should not be on the front side of the photograph. One copy of an 8" x 10" color print can be mailed to Air Force News Agency/NSPP, 203 Norton Street, San Antonio, TX 78226-1848. The name of the executive should be included on the reverse of the photograph, and the photograph should be protected with cardboard on each side when mailing. More information on this policy can be obtained by calling (210) 925-1362 or DSN 945-1362.

**Q.** What is an Invitational Travel Order (ITO)? Can an ITO be used by a Presidential Rank Award (PRA) recipient for his/her spouse?

**A.** An ITO provides for travel and transportation of an individual from the business place or home to the place where that individual's services are required and return to the original point.

A spouse of a PRA winner may attend the ceremony on an ITO. Reimbursement for travel and transportation expenses ordinarily may be allowed for one individual to attend a major award ceremony (e.g., a Presidential award ceremony, annual award ceremony of the agency or major organizational component, or a prestigious honorary award ceremony sponsored by a non-Federal organization) provided: (1) the travel and transportation are authorized by the head of the DoD component concerned or designee and (2) the individual is a person of the award recipient's choosing who is related by blood or affinity or whose close association with the award winner is the equivalent of a family relationship.

**Q.** There is a new executive in my office. How do I conduct an appointment ceremony?

**A.** The following is an example of an appointment ceremony.

### **SES Member Appointment Ceremony**

#### **Opening Remarks by Presiding Official:**

- Welcome distinguished guests, family members and friends, guests.
- Provide a brief biographical sketch of work history, education/training, family.
- Present the person to be promoted to the audience.

**Administer the Civilian Oath of Office (Optional):** The presiding official has the appointee raise his/her right hand and repeat the oath of office.

#### ***Civilian Oath of Office***

*I (Individual's Name) swear that I will support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, and without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.*

**Reading of the Appointment Order:** The presiding official reads the appointment order:

*The Secretary of the Air Force has imposed special trust and confidence in the patriotism, leadership, and managerial competencies of (Individual's Name). In view of these qualities and (his/her) demonstrated potential for increased responsibility, (he/she) is, therefore, appointed in the United States Air Force to the Senior Executive Service, effective (date) in accordance with Title Five, United States Code, by order of (name of installation commander).*

**Pinning of SES Insignia:** The presiding official, family member, or special guest pins on the SES lapel insignia.

**Remarks by Appointee:** The presiding official offers the appointee an opportunity to comment.

**Official Photographs:** An Air Force photographer takes an official group photograph of the appointee, presiding official, and family, as appropriate.

**Receiving Line:** The presiding official requests that guests congratulate the appointee and partake of refreshments, as appropriate.



# Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Glossary

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFMC	Air Force Materiel Command
AFPC	Air Force Personnel Center
AFSLMO	Air Force Senior Leader Management Office
ALC	Air Logistics Center
BAH	Basic Allowance for Housing
CPF	Civilian Personnel Flight
CSRA	Civil Service Reform Act
CSRS	Civil Service Retirement System
DCIPS	Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System
DISES	Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service
DISL	Defense Intelligence Senior Level
DLAMP	Defense Leadership and Management Program
DoD	Department of Defense
DSR	Discontinued Service Retirement
DV	Distinguished Visitor
ECQ	Executive Core Qualification
ERB	Executive Resources Board
ES	Executive Schedule
FEI	Federal Executive Institute
FEPCA	Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990
FERS	Federal Employees' Retirement System
GO	General Officer
GS	General Schedule
ID	Identification

ITO	Invitational Travel Order
JTR	Joint Travel Regulations
LDS	Leadership for Democratic Society
MAJCOM	Major Command
OGE	U.S. Office of Government Ethics
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
OSF	Office of the Secretary of the Air Force
PRA	Presidential Rank Award
PRB	Performance Review Board
PRP	Performance Review Panel
QRB	Qualifications Review Board
RIF	Reduction in Force
SEA	Senior Executives Association
SECAF	Secretary of the Air Force
SES	Senior Executive Service
SIES	Senior Intelligence Executive Service
SIP	Senior Intelligence Professional
SL	Senior Level
SLOC	Senior Leader Orientation Course
SPF	Servicing Personnel Flight
ST	Scientific and Professional
TDY	Temporary Duty
U.S.	United States
U.S.C.	United States Code
USAF	U.S. Air Force



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## Glossary of Terms

**Air Force Executive Resources Board (ERB).** A board appointed by the Secretary of the Air Force to establish policies for and to manage the senior executive program.

**Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC).** An Air Force Field Operating Agency that provides civilian and military personnel operations and services.

**Appointing Authority, Authority, Performance Review Board (PRB) Appointing Authority.** These terms are used to designate individuals to whom the Secretary of the Air Force has delegated the authority to approve fully successful and above performance appraisals, convene PRBs, grant performance awards, nominate Presidential Rank Award recipients, and perform other related performance actions.

**Central Performance Review Panel (PRP).** An ad hoc panel appointed by the Air Force ERB Chair to review and recommend final Air Force action on Presidential Rank Award nominations.

**Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF).** An operating personnel office that services a senior executive's position.

**Days.** Calendar days, unless otherwise stated.

**Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS).** A separate personnel system for intelligence organizations and positions in DoD.

**Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (DISES).** A DCIPS position or member equivalent to SES.

**Defense Intelligence Senior Level (DISL).** A DCIPS position or member equivalent to SL.

**Invitational Travel Order (ITO).** A travel order used to pay for the travel and transportation of a non-Government individual to attend a meeting or prestigious award ceremony.

**Organizational Performance Review Panel (PRP).** A panel that makes recommendations on Presidential Rank Awards for SES members assigned to the organizations they serve.

**Performance Review Board (PRB).** A board that makes recommendations on performance appraisal ratings, awards (bonuses), and pay level adjustments for SES members assigned to the organizations they serve.

**Precedence Priority (DV) Code.** A protocol designator. DV-6 indicates equivalence with brigadier general for protocol purposes, DV-5 indicates equivalence with major general, and DV-4 indicates equivalence with lieutenant general.

**Presidential Rank Award (PRA).** The highest award a career SES member can receive.

**Qualifications Review Board (QRB).** OPM-chartered board established to review and certify the executive qualifications of individuals selected for initial career appointment to the SES.

**Scientific and Professional (ST) Position.** A civilian position above grade GS-15 that does not meet the managerial criteria for SES and is a scientific or professional position engaged in research and development functions.

**Secretariat.** Offices of the Secretary of the Air Force (OSAF).

**Senior Executive.** All SES, ST, SL, DISES, and DISL appointees.

**Senior Executive Service (SES) Career Appointee.** An employee with a career appointment who was selected through the SES merit staffing process and whose executive qualifications have been approved by the QRB or who was converted to the SES when the SES became effective in 1979. Appointees who have completed SES probation receive SES career tenure.



**SES Career Reserved Position.** An SES position with duties and responsibilities that require the position to be filled by a career appointee to ensure the public's confidence in the impartiality of the Government.

**SES General Position.** An SES position not designated as career reserved. This position can be filled with either a career or noncareer SES member.

**SES Limited Emergency Appointee.** An employee with a nonrenewable appointment to a position established to meet a bona fide, unanticipated, urgent need that may last up to 18 months. Appointments are made only to General positions after ERB and OPM approval. Appointments do not require merit staffing procedures, and appointees do not acquire SES career status. Appointments may be terminated at the discretion of the Secretary of the Air Force or his/her designee.

**SES Limited Term Appointee.** An employee with a nonrenewable appointment to a position that will not be continued beyond 36 months. Appointments are made only to General positions after ERB and OPM approval. Appointments do not require merit staffing procedures, and appointees do not acquire SES career status. Appointments may be terminated at the discretion of the Secretary of the Air Force or his/her designee.

**SES Member.** An employee in the SES.

**SES Noncareer Appointee.** The Secretary of Defense approves all noncareer appointees, subject to receipt of appropriate noncareer appointment authorizations from OPM. Appointments are to be made only to General positions. Appointments do not require merit staffing procedures, and appointees do not acquire SES career status. The Secretary of the Air Force or his/her designee may terminate appointments at any time after concurrence by the Secretary of Defense.

**Senior Level (SL) Member.** An employee appointed to an SL position.

**Servicing Personnel Office.** The CPF, AFPC, or headquarters senior executive management staff that services a senior executive position.

**SL Position.** A civilian position above grade GS-15 that meets neither the managerial criteria for SES nor the research and development criteria for ST.

**ST Member.** An employee appointed to an ST position.